

VOL. 67 NUMBER 5 • AUGUST 2025

THE AMBASSADOR

A publication of First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF STILLWATER

Upcoming Worship Dates

- Worship in Fellowship Hall August 10th & August 17th
 - August 17th worship includes a Stephen Ministry Minute for Mission, Blessing the Backpacks and educators, and a focus on faith formation!
- Children and Worship resumes August 24th
- Sunday School classes for all ages resume September 7th

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Our Daily Bread All Church Workday on August 16th!

Sign up now!

(See page 5 for details)

The September Ambassador deadline is Thursday, September 4 at 5:00 p.m.
Articles may be submitted to fpchurch1889@stillwaterfpc.org.

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Changes to Finance Hours

Starting August 18th, 2025, our Finance Assistant, Rachel Hearn, will begin her Fall 2025 College Semester. While she will still be available to the church, most days she will be working outside of our standard office hours. Please contact her via email: rachel.hearn@stillwaterfpc.org, if you have any questions or need support.

We wish the best of luck to Rachel!

Called Congregational Meeting Sunday, August 24th

Session has called a congregational meeting for Sunday, August 24th, directly after worship, for the stated purpose of voting to dissolve the pastoral relationship between First Presbyterian Church and the Rev. Dr. Diane Janssen Hemmen.



IN MEMORIUM

Margy Knox

Born
October 18, 1935
Entered the Church Triumphant
July 19, 2025

*Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life.
Whoever believes in me shall never die."*

JULY 31, 2025 INCOME/EXPENSE REPORT

	JULY	YEAR TO DATE
Giving	\$54,434	\$366,670
Other Income (Royalties, Perpetual Pledges, Event Income, etc)	\$12,842	\$109,830
Total Income	\$67,276	\$476,529
Expenditures	\$53,093	\$460,225
Net	\$14,183	\$16,304



Congregational News

Your Deacons are Ready to Deliver Soup to You!

The only thing missing from the Deacon's Congregational Soup Ministry is knowing who needs a meal prepared with TLC. Some wonderful cooks have prepared vegetarian, gluten-free, and meat-based soups that are frozen and ready to go. These will be accompanied with sides to round out a complete meal.

If you know someone in the FPC congregation who could use a meal after having surgery, illness or perhaps an injury, let Debby or Ann know. They will coordinate with you for a deacon to meet you at the church to give you the soup so you can deliver a meal. Or, if you prefer, a soup ministry deacon will deliver it.

Please contact (leave a message if no answer):

- Ann Houston: 405-742-6838
annchouston1@gmail.com
- Debby Schoenecke: 806-789-1055
debbyschoenecke49@gmail.com



September 5 "First Friday Peace Jam" in Fellowship Hall 6 PM Potluck Supper, 7-8:30 PM Music Jam

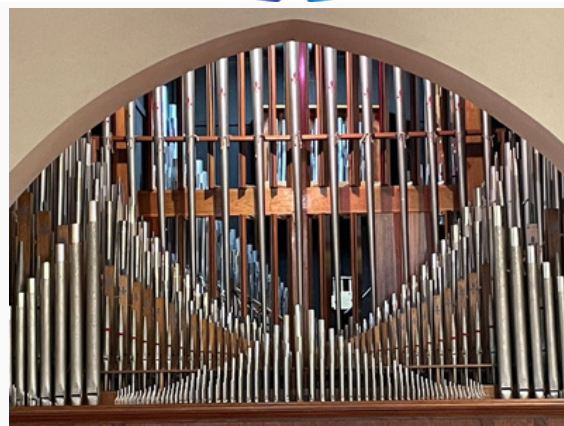
Kick off September with good food and fun music! This is for all ages – invite friends, bring the kids, and come and go as you like.

Maracas, triangles, djembe, tambourines, and a keyboard are provided for anyone to play. Bring some food to share, then play, sing along (words are on the screen), or just listen and tap your feet! You can also just come for the music if you prefer.

Questions? Jim Beckstrom: james@beckstromgroup.com

August Worship Updates

- On Sundays August 10th and August 17th, we will gather for worship in Fellowship Hall rather than the Sanctuary. In part due to organ work taking place this month, these two Sundays have also given the Worship & Music Committee an opportunity to add variety to the music we hear and sing during worship. Dr. Josh Taylor and Youth Elder Noah Taylor will be leading music (instrumental and vocals) on both Sundays.
- Sunday, August 17th, will also include a Backpack Blessing as we send our students (littles through college) off to a new school year with our blessings and prayers, and a special pin.
- Worship on Sundays, August 24th and 31st will be held in the Sanctuary, but our music will be piano-only while the organ work continues, through the generosity of our members and friends as part of the **From Strength To Strength** Campaign.





FPC Around Town: Dancing Turtle Recap

The third annual Dancing Turtle Arts Festival was a huge success! Held the weekend of July 25-27, this year's festival coincided with the opening of Block 34, Stillwater's newest park and live music venue. While overseeing the KidZone, I was tremendously impressed with the turnout from adults and children alike! We had a variety of activities hosted by Prairie Arts, StillyArts, Still Wonder, and the OSU Museum of Art, in addition to arts and crafts hosted by our KidZone volunteers. Kids of all ages enjoyed bubbles and pinwheels, paintings and sculptures, a Dancing Turtle storytime hosted by the public library, and a decorated bike parade. One of the most endearing parts of the weekend was watching entire families spend an hour or two in the heat of the day constructing beaded turtle keychains- fun for all ages! With so many creative outlets to explore, by far the most popular event of the KidZone was Find the Golden Turtle, in which kids would explore the entirety of the festival in search of three hidden golden turtles. Upon submitting photographs of themselves with each of the turtles, they would be awarded a coupon for a free Kona Ice treat. It was a big hit, especially in light of the heat!

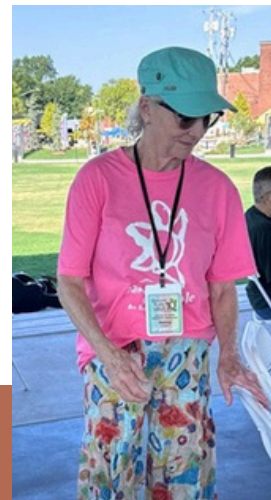
Many volunteers were members of FPC, yet another way our church continues to engage with the community. Nancy Beckstrom organized her book club to assist with KidZone throughout the weekend in memory of a beloved friend, Jimi Davidson. Special thanks also to the family of Paula Kendrick for three generations worth of assistance in cleaning up our space at the end of the festival! We are already looking forward to Dancing Turtle 2026 and would encourage any members who are interested to consider joining in the fun!

~Lilly Flewellen



The mission of Dancing Turtle Arts Festival is to bring people together through creativity and community, where everyone finds their place. They strive to ensure inclusivity for all, showcasing new and emerging artists and musicians, offering unique performances, and providing a fun-filled family friendly environment with a kid-specific zone. 2025's festival included the grand opening of Block 34 in downtown Stillwater, making this year one to remember!

What started as an idea has now become a Stillwater summer event staple, with each year drawing more attendees than the previous year. Jim Beckstrom, pictured above, is the man behind the initial idea and has worked tirelessly to coordinate and bring Dancing Turtle to life the last three years.





Interfaith Music Brunch @ Dancing Turtle

One of the highlights of the Dancing Turtle Arts Festival each year is the Interfaith Music Brunch on Sunday morning. The Stillwater Noon Lions provide a pancake breakfast complete with scrambled eggs, sausage, and coffee while music and spoken words of faith and peace are shared by performers and listeners alike. This year's musical lineup was started off, as is tradition, by Mt. Zion Baptist Church, followed by the Stillwater Gospel Singers (a subset of the Stillwater Community Singers), the music team from Countryside Church, Hugh Foley (sharing Muscogee Creek Hymns and their origins), and Cary Younge (sharing Otoe Hymns).



ALL CHURCH
WORKDAY AT
OUR DAILY BREAD
AUGUST 16, 2025 | 8:45 AM

*Sign
Up
Now*

OUR DAILY BREAD FOOD & RESOURCE CENTER
701 E. 12TH ST.
STILLWATER, OK, 74074

The Workday Signup contact is Dale Ingram.
Email: dale.ingram@sbcglobal.net
Phone: (405) 612-3365

Join your FPC family for a workday at Our Daily Bread on Saturday, August 16th! Volunteers of all ages are welcome, although those under 16 need to have an adult with them. Volunteer jobs include stocking shelves, working in the warehouse to sort food donations, and assisting ODB guests with their shopping.

ODB has requested a list of all volunteers ahead of time, so if you are wanting to take part, please contact Dale Ingram.

Email: dale.ingram@sbcglobal.net

Phone: (405) 612-3365



Learn more about ODB, who they are, and the work they do via the QR code.

Children's & Youth Ministry



Leader Launch for all 2025-2026 children's and youth ministry volunteers!

You're invited to enjoy brunch while we equip you for the year ahead. We'll do some focused training on neuroaffirming practices and tools that can make a difference in your ministry. Childcare for both children and youth is available in the Youth Suite while the adults enjoy a focused time of connection and training.

RSVP here or via the QR code by Wednesday, August 20th.

Pay It Forward Challenge

It's back! 1st-12th graders are invited to participate this fall in the Be The Neighbor Pay It Forward Challenge. Those who participate will receive a sum of money and then will be challenged to use that money to "be a neighbor" in this community and in the world. We'll study the story of the Good Samaritan and the Greatest Commandment and then live out how we can show mercy, love our neighbors, and love God by making a difference with the money in the Pay It Forward Challenge. Look for the registration link to participate in the weekly children's and youth ministry email! All children and youth planning to participate will receive the money and more instructions for the challenge at the Pay It Forward Kickoff on September 14th at 9:45am. We can't wait to see how God will work through our children and youth!



Children and Worship Volunteer Training

Sunday, August 17th

9:15-10:45 a.m.

For Storytellers, Helpers, and Youth Helpers

*Youth Helpers must be 7th grade and up and attend the training.

Children and Worship Volunteer Training will be held in the Westminster Room.

Children's & Youth Ministry



Save the Date for the Youth Retreat

6th-12th graders are invited to an overnight retreat at Camp Loughridge! We'll depart the FPC parking lot by 9:00 a.m. on September 27th and return by 1:30 p.m. on September 28th. This is a do-not-miss weekend of building relationships and growing faith through games, a challenge course, Bible study, time in nature, worship, and more. Look for registration information to come!



All parents of children are invited to the Hospitality Area on September 7th to enjoy a light brunch, an opportunity to connect with other parents, and a chance to learn about the year ahead in children's ministry at FPC.

FPC Youth @ Presbyterian Youth Triennium

Five FPC youth and three adults were a part of our Oklahoma delegation made up of 22 youth and adults who traveled to Louisville, KY the last week of July for Presbyterian Youth Triennium, a national conference where over 2000 Presbyterian youth and adults gathered for four days of worship, study, recreation, mission, and fun.





Children & Worship Returns August 24th

Beginning August 24, children ages 3 through 3rd grade are invited to come to Children and Worship each Sunday in the Westminster Room following the Time with Children at the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Just follow the banner and the volunteers will be waiting at the back of the Sanctuary.

We love sharing this time of age-appropriate worship with our young children including singing and signing, praying, and seeing and hearing the stories of God. There is also a time for the children to respond to the sacred stories using art, books, puzzles, or working with the stories they have just seen and heard. As we respond to God's love, we also have a time for children to offer their coins or talents. Parents may pick up children in the Westminster Room following worship.

Parents, please note: On days that communion is celebrated in the Sanctuary, your child will be brought back to the Sanctuary during the singing of the Doxology following the offering. You may meet them at the back of the Sanctuary or volunteers will assist them in finding their families in the pews. It is important that children experience the sacrament with their families and congregation.

If your family is new to Children and Worship, please pick up a Family Guide in the Westminster Room and be sure to complete the Family Information Form found within the guide, so that we are aware of any health or allergy issues and have your current contact information. The form may be returned to the Children and Worship volunteers.

Blessings, Carolyn Caldwell, Children and Worship Coordinator

Children's Ministry

Children's Sunday School

Starting September 7 - Every Sunday from 9:45-10:45 a. m. - begins and ends in the Worship Center! For children 4yrs - 5th grade.

Gathering Time:

- All children age four to 5th grade are invited to start the Sunday school hour at 9:45 a.m. in the Worship Center. We'll gather and sing together before the Shepherds take the kids to their classrooms. Parents can pick up children at 10:45 a.m. in the Worship Center.

Faith Kid-nection (4-5yr olds):



Children Pre-K to Kindergarten age are invited to join in play, games and songs as we explore God's love and grow in faith, using the Dwell curriculum. The class meets in room 122 in the preschool wing, but begins and ends in the Worship Center. Teachers: Ellen Ingram, Melody Reavis, Hope Plum, and Lyle Eastman

SpiritLink (1st-5th graders):



SpiritLink is a workshop rotation-model Sunday School in which students learn about a Bible story or theme from different perspectives throughout each unit. Lessons are told through the year using various ways of learning: art, science, digital media, storytelling, movies, drama, and coking!

Our August/September SpiritLink unit will focus on the story of Abraham and Sarah.

SpiritLink Teachers and Shepherds

Shepherd: Suzii Parsons

- Modern Magi: Dustin & Virginia Charter
- Scrolls & Scribes: Pascha Franklin
- Thou Art: Kim Leffingwell and Shannon Frohock
- On Location: Nicole Frohling
- Burning Bush Theater: Courtney & Eric Savage
- Bread of Life Cafe: Eric Windhausen

PRESBYTERIAN • YOUTH • GROUP



Presbyterian
Youth Group

Youth Ministry

Youth Sunday School

Starting September 7

Sundays from 9:45-10:45 a.m. – Youth Suite

For ALL 6th-12th graders

Sundays, 5:00-6:30 p.m. in the Youth Suite.
A time for connection, fellowship, discipleship,
and living our faith. At PYG, we play, laugh,
pray, study scripture, serve, ask big questions,
and grow as faithful disciples. Join us!

PYG Sponsors for 2025-2026

Mary Emmet Kelly Nipp
Rusty Rex

September

- 7 - Fall Kickoff (5:00-7:00 p.m.)
- 14 - Pay It Forward Kickoff (9:45 a.m.)
PYG (5:00 - 6:30 p.m.)
- 21 - PYG (5:00 - 6:30pm)
- 27-28 - Youth Retreat @ Camp Loughridge

Gathering Time:

- Youth Sunday school begins at 9:45 a.m. all together in the Youth Suite for fellowship and snacks before splitting up into age groups.

Middle School (grades 6-7; Youth Suite Blue Rm):

- Colaborate and Reform Ancestors – Students will study the ancestors of the New Testament using 'so what?' questions that will help them engage with the New Testament story.
- Teachers: Dale Ingram and Youth Ministry Asst.

Junior High (grades 8-9, Youth Suite Orange Rm)

- Confirmation is an intense, but rewarding, 9-month journey through what we believe as Christians, and more specifically as Presbyterians. Who are we? Who came before us? Why do we do what we do? What do I believe? Youth will wrestle with these and other questions and make their own faith choices. An opportunity will be given to individuals at the end of the course to make a profession of faith and join the body of believers here as a member at FPC Stillwater if they so choose.
- Teachers: Carolyn Caldwell and Rusty Rex

Senior High (grades 10-12, Youth Suite):

- Faith and Life: discussions on faith, the Bible, and life
- Teachers: Elijah Ankrom and Josh Taylor



Come for fellowship and connection with other youth parents as we talk about the year ahead in youth ministry. Snacks, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages will be served.

Adult & Fellowship Ministries (New, combined committee!)

Summer Sips

The Summer Sips fellowship hour before worship has ended now that the fall semester is beginning.

Adult Sunday School: two class offerings:

- Feasting on the Word is a Bible study based on the lectionary. It meets in the New Library upstairs and will resume, after summer break, on Sunday, September 7. The discussion leader for this class is Denise Rex.
- Faith & Fellowship is a typical discussion class led by willing members in attendance. Participants choose a book to read and discuss. Many of the books have a video component that participants watch at the first of the class hour. The current study is Half Truths by Adam Hamilton. As participants near the end of one study, they choose the next. The class meets in the Multi-Purpose Room and does not take a summer break which means it is currently meeting.
- Updates about both classes will appear in the weekly e-letter, First Things.

Seasoned Adults

- Seasoned Adults will begin its 2025-2026 season on August 21 in the Youth Suite for a boxed sandwich dinner and game night. If you attend and have games at home to share with the group for the evening, please bring them. There is no charge for dinner this month. If you would like to attend but haven't RSVP'd yet, please do so by signing in on the church Breeze app or by calling Sandy Cohlmia, 405-269-6594, by 5:00 pm August 12.
- The group meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month in the Fellowship Hall, the location being an exception this August – no meetings in December, June, and July.
- Typically, there is a \$10 charge to help fund the evening's meal and an honoraria for the speaker.
- Updates about Seasoned Adults programs will also appear in the weekly e-letter, First Things.

Fellowship

We are hoping to offer all church members a fellowship evening in early spring. More information about that will be available later in the fall.

PW News

While Presbyterian Women have taken a brief summer hiatus, the board is very interested in how FPC PW can better meet the needs of more women in our congregation. To that end, we launched a survey and are still gathering the responses. Use the QR code to the right if you are willing to give us your feedback!

We also have gathered to distribute this year's Bible Study book—Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ. Bible Study is on the second Wednesday of each month at FPC Fellowship Hall from 9:30 to 10:00 for social fellowship and study from 10:00 – 11:00. We will start the study in September. If you are interested in attending all or part of this study, please let any PW board member know so we can make sure you have access to the study.

Making a difference in Stillwater is part of our goal. The PW Synod Coordinating Team met during the PW Synod Gathering in late July. They voted to give Stillwater Mission of Hope a \$300 donation to further the efforts to address homelessness in our community.



Behind the Walls: A Trustees' Update

Trustees continue to work on multiple issues which have been outlined in previous Ambassador articles in addition to the projects below.

- The preschool renovation is expected to be completed by Wednesday, August 6th just in time for teachers returning August 11th to set up the rooms. School is starting back up August 18.
- The HVAC project is nearing completion with final new pipe insulation and installation of new pumps. Northwest Controls is expected to be working in the Fellowship Hall over the next couple of weeks to complete automation work of the system.
- The parking lot joint sealing project is still planned for late August or early September. The goal is to do it in segments as to not interfere with everyday parking needs. We have been very fortunate to have a new heat exchanger delivering cool air during these hot and humid past couple of months.



CHAIR YOGA @ THE CHURCH



When: Mondays beginning August 4, 2025 from 10:30-11:20 a.m.

Where: Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church (FPC), Stillwater, OK. FPC is located at 6th and Duck; parking is available off Duck St.

What to wear: Something comfortable that you can move in!

Why Do Chair Yoga?

Improves flexibility, balance, and muscle strength

Reduces stress, builds community

Improves breath capacity and circulation

First class is FREE

Introductory offer: 5 classes for \$50 **Drop-in** \$15/class



About the instructor: Dr. Carol Bender is certified in the field of Yoga Therapy where the principles and practices of yoga are used to promote health and well-being. You can read more about Carol at www.benderyoga.com or follow her at [cbenderyoga](https://www.instagram.com/cbenderyoga) or [@benderyoga](https://www.instagram.com/benderyoga). Carol also teaches yoga at Legacy.

For more information or to register, contact:

Carol Bender: (405) 747-9826 / bender.yoga@icloud.com



Scout Updates

- **Cub Scout Pack 3842** had a busy and exciting summer filled with hands-on learning and outdoor adventure! In May, the Scouts learned fishing safety and spent the afternoon at Boomer Lake, where one lucky Scout even caught a fish! June included a behind-the-scenes tour of the Stillwater Airport featuring an up-close look at an aircraft rescue vehicle, followed by a Pack bike ride around Boomer Lake. In July, the Scouts explored OSU's Geology Lab, cracked open geodes, and later built their own sailboats for the Rainwater Regatta. In August, we wrapped up the season with a fun and refreshing visit to the Boomer Lake Splash Pad. With the school year now in session, the Pack has resumed regular meetings every Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Families with children in grades K-5 who are interested in Cub Scouting are encouraged to contact Pake Wing at pack3842@gmail.com. Fall is a wonderful time to get involved!



- During the summer months, **Troop 820** attended summer camp at Kerr Scout Ranch at Slippery Falls. Scouts spent a week camping and working on merit badges and rank requirements while having a good time together. In July, we visited the Stafford Air & Space Museum in Weatherford, OK as a day trip and also visited the Oklahoma Railway Museum in Oklahoma City. For service work, scouts helped with Backpack Buddies where they assisted Altrusa in distributing school backpacks to area students for the return to school. Scouts also volunteered at the Payne County Relay for Life. Upcoming activities include a September float trip and attending an American Indian Powwow and dance competition hosted by the Ponca Tribe in Ponca City. In the first half of July, six scouts and three leaders backpacked at Philmont on a 9 day trek. They shared an experience they will always remember. We look forward to our OSU football gameday parking fund raising and would like to thank the First Presbyterian Church in advance for this opportunity.



Scout Updates

- Scouts BSA Troop 888** The months of June and July were busy ones. On the second week of June, Troop 888 went to Kerr Ranch at Slippery falls for summer camp. They all worked to earn various merit badges of their choice. Everyone had a great time and lots of memories were made along the way. In July, the scouts went to The Gathering Place in Tulsa Oklahoma along with visiting the Philbrook Museum. The scouts had fun playing at the Gathering Place while sampling food from various cultures. At the museum, they got to make an origami samurai hat, participate in Suminagashi (dyeing paper), and learn about various historical works of art. They even got to see artwork about Philmont Scout Ranch. If you would like to keep up with Troop 888's scouting journey, feel free to visit our Facebook page: BSA Troop 888 Stillwater OK. If you know a girl aged 11-17 years old who is interested in joining us, please contact our Scoutmaster Elisabeth Szabo at troop888gbsa@gmail.com.



City-Wide Stephen Ministry Training coming this fall

Stephen Ministry is an important way we as a congregation carry out our mission to share God's love, specifically, with those going through difficult times in life. A trained Stephen Minister from our congregation can be matched with someone experiencing life challenges to listen to them and walk with them providing spiritual and emotional support. It is life-giving and life-changing ministry for both the care receiver AND the Stephen Minister.

Trained Stephen Ministers are matched with someone who has requested the care of a Stephen Minister for confidential weekly 1-hour visits where Stephen Ministers listen, reflect, encourage, and pray together. It is that simple and that profound.

To meet the needs we have, **we need Stephen Ministers!** We especially need to train male Stephen Ministers. We need people with gifts of caring, compassion, patience, and faith who are willing to participate in 50-hours of training in caring and listening skills.

Stephen Ministry Training will begin this fall. We will join with other Stephen Ministry congregations in Stillwater on Monday evenings from 6:30-9:00 p.m. to learn together how to best be a Christian friend to someone who needs support.

Please prayerfully consider this calling. If you would like to learn more about Stephen Ministry training, please contact Kay Stewart at 405-747-5913 or kay.stewart1806@gmail.com

The Ambassador
First Presbyterian Church
524 S. Duncan St.
Stillwater, OK 74074
405-372-5580
www.stillwaterfpc.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Worship at First Presbyterian

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:45 am Sunday School Classes

11:00 am Worship Service

Midweek Prayer

Thursdays 12:00pm via Zoom

THE AMBASSADOR

AUGUST 2025

A Back-to-School Prayer

For the 2025-2026 school year

O Lord, as our children return to school, we pray for the safety of all students, teachers, administrators, and staff. We pray for strength to comfort the fearful and face the challenges ahead. Surround parents and caregivers with peace to ease any anxiety about reentering the buildings. Give our children patience to deal with new rules as they renew friendships and develop new relationships in safe ways. Encourage parents and caregivers to nurture children at days end so that they may thrive another day in school. We pray for churches to surround all those in schools with more prayer and support this year than ever before so that all children reach their full potential. Amen.

-Episcopal Relief & Development

